

Identifying a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Person

- Deaf person points to ear and then mouth as a sign for "deaf".
- Hard of Hearing person (HH) doesn't respond or responds inappropriately. Often asks speaker to repeat self. Hearing aids may be obvious.
- An international symbol of deafness or the word "deaf" is on the back of the driver's license. (MCL 257.310)
- Approved Card stored on the visor or in a purse or wallet.
- "Deaf and hard of hearing people" is preferred term over "hearing impaired people."

Communication Tips

- Keep paper and pen handy.
- Learn a few simple signs.
- Get patient's attention before talking or beginning care.
- Face the patient while speaking.
- Allow extra time for communication. Do not appear rushed.
- Offer assistive listening device to HH patient.
- Provide interpreter when important information is requested or provided and when reception is decreased (anxious, weak, following anesthesia).
- Avoid covering your mouth with your hands.

- Don't exaggerate lip movement.
- Explain changes in medication or patient care.
- Explain the nature of all conversations that take place in front of the patient but were not made accessible.
- Keep one arm free of medical equipment so patient can communicate through gestures or writing.
- Alert staff that patient is Deaf/HH.
- Remain calm at all times.

The Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing publishes this card and interpreter directory. Contact the DODHH at 201 N. Washington Square, Suite 150, Lansing, MI 48909. 517-335-6004 (V/TTY), 877-499-6232 toll free (T/V), www.mcddc-dodhh.org

For communication assistance, contact: (All numbers are during the business hours except 24 hr nbr as indicated by*)

- Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 517-335-6004 V/TTY; 877-499-6232 toll free T/V
- Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 800-968-7327 toll free
- Battle Creek, Deaf Link, 269-288-0464
- Grand Rapids, Deaf Etc., 616-732-7358
- Pontiac, Deaf C.A.N., 248-523-1998*
- Detroit Metro, Deaf Options, 313-961-8118 T; 313-961-8120 V
- Detroit Metro, Deaf, Hearing and Sign Language Center, 313-341-1353
- Flint, Communication Access Center, 800-466-7744* toll free
- Saginaw, V.O.I.C.E., 989-497-7111
- Roseville, Sign Language Services of Michigan, 810-459-3967*

*24-hr

Communication Guide

for Medical Personnel



 **Communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person**

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